Then I'll Come Back to You

By LARRY EVANS

Author of "Once to Every Man"

CHAPTER XV.

Honey.

GARRY entered upon his new duties the following morning in a spirit anything but reassuring to his companion. Up to that time he had made his own industry the butt of much good natured ridicule, viewing it apparently as a sort of vacation novelty amusing enough while the novelty lasted. But he went from task to task that next day in a methodical, dogged fashion that was farthest of all from amiability. Two or three times Steve, trying to spare him needless effort, attempting to show him how to favor blistered hands and aching back, met with rebuffs so curt that he learned to keep his advice to himself. He knew what end Garry was working to achieve. He would have allowed himself to smile over the thought that the other man would be tired enough before night came without trying to make that work any harder, only he did not dare venture that smile.

"You've been trying to help me," Garry said to Steve. "You've been trying to throw me a line. And for a time I tried to catch it, Steve. But it isn't in me to try that hard any more. Some men do things for what there is in it—the pecuniary reward, I mean. Some men—you, for instance—because their self respect won't let them stop, win or lose. But now and then there

"Miriam Burrell!" he breathed.

happens one who keeps on trying only because there is one other person at least who may be the gladder for his success. I don't expect you to understand. I know it will sound small and cowardly to you. It's too lonesome living, Steve, when there's no one who cares whether you live or not!"

"That does not fit your case," Steve objected instantly, "when your danger or your safety keeps a woman watching white faced with terror through the night for your return."

Garry propped himself upon one elbow, the better to see the speaker's countenance.

"My safety?" he repeated blankly. "My return?" And then, wanly grateful, "You are not the sort of man who lies convincingly, Steve."

And then Stephen O'Mara let him have it—all the story which had lain so many days in his heart. There were times when Garry went even paler during the short recital, times when everything else was submerged by the incredulity that flooded his face. But before Steve had finished the last trace of doubt was gone. Before the end came Garry had bowed his head, this time in flushed, self conscious wonder which transfigured him.

"Miriam Burrell!" he breathed. "Proud, intolerant"—

His head came up. The next instant he voiced the words which Steve most wanted to hear.

"You shouldn't have told me this," said he. "You had no right, unless"—

Steve laughed at him.

"God bless you, boy," he exclaimed. "I asked her if I might. Why, don't you understand that she meant to herself if I didn't? You see, she is—far, far braver than you are, Garry."

Garry lifted his hands and hid his face.

So quietly that his exit made no sound Steve slipped to his feet and passed outside. It had stopped raining. The hardwood ridges, touched by frost, were flaming streaks of color against the rainwashed evergreens when he picked his way down to the river and found a dry stone for a seat. An hour and more he sat there while his thoughts went back over the trail of the years, the trail which had led him from that cabin to a pair of violet eyes and lips that arched like a boy's.

Steve let his mind turn again unreservedly to his own problem that morning. He tried to face sure eyed the road which still stretched ahead. He did not know that Garrett Devereau, the debonaire, the cynical, the world weary and world wise, had broken down and was sobbing noiselessly, as men sob, in the room which he had left, shaking with deep and terrible gasps that racked his very soul. But it was already daybreak; it was trail's end now for Garry. It does make a difference if one knows that some one cares.

Upon their return to Thirty Mile two nights later Joe's attitude of criticism was the first thing which piqued Steve's interest. There was something ludicrous in the former's voice as he sat and anathematized the food which the cook boy brought to the table, even though he devoured hungrily all that his plate would hold. And because Joe was so obviously primed for a sensation that evening out of sheer perversity Steve struggled to draw him into a discussion of a topic which, just as obviously, had no appeal just then.

"What I hope to do," he confided gravely to Garry, "is to finish up at Morrison and make possible the transfer of some of those men up here. We are working only one shift now. With two I figure we could sail along a-fogging. How does that strike you, Joe?"

That was only one of his many attempts, but all of them, save for the inner laughter which they afforded, were totally without result. Joe's answers were monosyllabic, his attention wandering at best. To that particular question he nodded his head spiritlessly.

"This butter ain't none too fresh," he growled sourly, "and I wonder if that cook boy thinks we dote on ham every meal? I don't for one. It may be all right if a man's plumb starving to death, but it don't lend no real elegance to a repast."

That gloomy complaint brought little more than a sparkle to Steve's eyes, but it made Garry lean forward in his place. Throughout the meal while the other two fenced in just such fashion he forgot his own food to listen, delighted anticipation in every feature. And when they had finished supper and pushed back their chairs he stood grinning a little, watching Joe survey that littered room which served as office and sleeping quarters for the chief engineer of the East Coast company. Fat Joe's gaze swung from wall to wall, from littered corner to heaped up chair. Then he shook his head in despair.

"It looks to me, Steve," he grunted, "as though you ain't never had no real training in tidiness, have you? There don't seem to be no system at all in the way you leave your things around. There's one boot over in that corner; it's got a mate, I know, because I saw you take them off last night. I wouldn't be certain otherwise. And it's the same way with all your things. Just look at this room! A nice place to receive callers in, now ain't it?"

That was the first lead he tendered them, but Steve, rather than gratify him with a direct question, chose to go forward in the dark. He leaned over and followed his usual custom when he wanted to think. He tapped out his pipe.

"But I can always find everything," he defended—"that is, unless you have taken the trouble to put things away. Then it's a tossup that something or other will never be found until it turns up of its own accord. It's not so bad, Joe." He, too, swung to survey the room. "Not so bad! Just a little unsettled, that's all. Are we likely to have any callers, do you think, who would object to this layout?"

Joe snorted, but his eyes were mournful. He knew that there was nothing else to do but yield a part at least.

"We ain't likely to," he murmured. "We're just naturally bound to have 'em. They're comin' in tomorrow, and I ask you again, ain't this a pleasing prospect to greet 'em?"

For all that he seemed to be staring ruefully down the room, he was watching for the surprise that darted across Steve's face. Momentarily the latter had forgotten his assumed air of placidity.

"Tomorrow? Who?" And then Steve laughed. "Go ahead and tell us, Joe. I'm beat! I'll admit that I'm panting with curiosity."

Joe pulled up a chair and dropped into it. It appealed to him, this method, whenever he had the time to spare. His pink face was still innocent of guile.

"I don't mind the men folks," he resumed. "That fat party, I mean, who wears the plaid suits, nor Caleb Hunter, either. Both of them are used to such truck as this. And I reckon it'll tickle the ladies too. But I can see Honey sticking his nose in the air and sniffin' supercilious like the first minute he gets his nose in the door. He ain't going to approve at all, at all—not any way you look at it."

"Honey!"

Both Steve and Garry ignored the rest of Joe's explanation to gasp that single word in concert.

"Who in the world do you mean by 'Honey?'"

"Who could I mean?" Joe demanded collectedly. "I didn't give him the name, did I? I mean that chap Wickersham, who owns the timber north of us. Foreign, ain't he? Sure, I thought so? Well, every time I run across that man's path my heart swells with patriotism. I guess I'm just as glad to be born plain United States."

The first part of that statement was listened to closely enough by both men; the last sentence or two, for all that it was heartfelt and sincere, was lost upon them both. And Steve's mirth was even more hysterical than was that of Garry Devereau.

"Honey!" he panted. "Now, isn't that a wonder? Joe, you're too good! You are altogether too good to be wasted on these timbered solitudes. Men pay $2 a seat, Joe, to hear performers work who are rank amateurs in comparison with you."

The riverman's eyes grew belligerent.

"Funny, is it? So awful funny! Well, perhaps you think I can't read plain print yet, never havin' enjoyed a liberal education. But take a look for yourself."

He pulled up a pile of newspapers which had come in since their absence, sorted out one that was creased open and handed it to Steve. It was an announcement of Barbara Allison's engagement to the Hon. Archibald Wickersham—that column to which Fat Joe had folded the sheet—a many days old announcement now. But the smile did not even stiffen upon Steve's lips. The picture which accompanied it was a poor one, heavy shadowed and smeared and lacking in detail, yet Barbara's face was unmistakable. The room became quiet. In that hush Garry realized that Joe's mistaken translation of the title had not been, as Joe had himself suggested, due to lack of knowledge, but to a desire to apprise his employer delicately of that which he believed was still news to him. And yet, from the easy way in which he read it, word for word, Garry was positive that all this which the New York daily blazoned forth with its customary mixture of snobbishness and vulgarity was no longer news to Steve. The latter's eyes lifted and dwelt long upon fat Joe's face.

"So that's where you got it, was it, Joe?" he asked evenly. "You make it 'Honey,' do you? And when do they come in, Joe?"

"Tomorrow night. One of the teamsters brought word this afternoon, just before you got back. Honey is going to have a look at his trees and things, the way I understand it. And the rest of them, I take it, want to look us over in our wild state. Where are we going to put them girls?"

Steve's answer was long in coming.

"Miss—Allison?" he wanted to know.

"And that tall, red headed one, Joe corrected promptly. I don't remember her name, but she's coming too."

As studiously as he had done a moment before, Garry again avoided Steve's eyes.

"Miriam Burrell," the latter supplied the omission. "And that's fine, isn't it? How long are they going to stay, Joe?"

But Joe had finished with trifling.

"Where are we going to put them?" he insisted doggedly.

"Why, we have a couple of shelter tents somewhere in the duffle, haven't we? We might pitch those if"—he looked about ruminatively—"if you think this is too squalid."

Joe turned appealingly to Garry, only to meet eyes flaring with deviltry.

"If you think that I'm going to give up my quarters for a troup of curious sightseers you're mistaken. If that's what you turned toward me for don't allow yourself to dwell upon it another minute. I'm a laboring man, and I have to have decent rest at nights. Do you suppose Cecile, the maid, would really mind a tent?"

And then Joe's face went red.

"Now ain't you the pair of rough jokers?" he whined. "Ain't you, though? But what's it going to be—this room or Garry's? The way I look at it we're elected to camp out ourselves. We're hardened sons of the wilderness, you know. That's what they always call us in print. But how am I going to get this place cleaned up?"

For another hour Joe argued it and at last settled upon the storehouse building as the likeliest for sleeping quarters for the feminine portion of the visitors.

"We have to eat in here, anyhow," he argued, "so I guess it's the best arrangement we can hit on. Honey won't be here much to meals either. That'll be one nice thing about it. He'll be going north directly. And now—now I guess I'll go out and have a look at the pantry, even if it does make me feel sort of faint every time I think of the grub we've got on hand. Canned beans and boiled potatoes and ham and bacon to round out a banquet. Why couldn't a couple of mighty hunters like you bring home more than one little haunch of venison? Bacon and beans! Steve, you sure have been living mighty low down on this job."

He went out with a great show of haste, but returned almost immediately, forgot the urgency of matters in general in finding Garry idly shuffling a deck of cards. Throughout the evening Joe had exhibited an unwillingness to meet the third man's glances directly, but it was impossible for him to remain oblivious to the clicking of the chips. He balanced first on one foot and then on the other for a moment, then diffidently drew up a chair.

"Just a friendly hand or two, I suppose," he suggested when the other made no move to begin. "Low limit and wide open, eh?"

"Just a friendly hand or two, I suppose," he suggested.

Garry still toyed with the cards.

"I don't suppose you've ever forgotten the first game in which we indulged, have you, Joe?" he asked at length.

Joe was not comfortable.

"Scarcely," he admitted, "scarcely."

"Nor the—stakes?" pursued Garry.

"I—I seem to recall 'em faintly."

Garry's peal of amusement was as rollicking as a boy's.

"So do I," he exclaimed. "And if I remember rightly you stated on that occasion that cash was no consideration with you. Does that still hold good?"

It was the first good look Joe had had at the other's face. The change he found in it seemed to perplex him more than a little.

"I take it that it does." Garry did not wait for his reply. And now—what do you say to that same full bottle against a—a ninety-nine year blanket restriction, with me at the wrong end of the odds?"

Joe slitted his eyes.

(To be Continued)

COL. ROOSEVELT'S SPEECH AT LOUISVILLE

Speech of Theodore Roosevelt at Louisville, Ky., Wednesday Evening, October 18th

Splendid Audience Hear Remarkable Address Following Parade and Republican Demonstration for Charles E. Hughes.

At the outset of my speech I wish to point out, as I have elsewhere pointed out, that the doctrine now is often advanced as to the impropriety of criticising the President, without any regard as to whether the criticism is or is not just, has no warrant either in history or on grounds of public morality. Andrew Jackson in a message to the Senate on April 15th, 1834, put the case exactly as it should be put. He said:

"The President is accountable at the bar of public opinion for every act of his administration. Subject only to the restraints of truth and justice, the free people of the United States have the undoubted right, as individuals or collectively, orally or in writing, at such times and in such language and form as they may think proper, to discuss his official conduct and express and promulgate their opinions concerning it."

This lays down the law that should be followed. There must be truth and justice in all that is said of the President, or of any one else; but less than any one other man in the nation has he the right to claim immunity from any criticism that is both just and truthful. I criticise President Wilson because his deeds have belied his words, and his words have belied one another.

Now, I do not regard such action on the part of Mr. Wilson and his followers, and the cynical frankness with which they avow it, as a matter for jest. I doubt if it is possible more effectively to undermine public morality in this country than by accustoming the people to regard promises made in politics with cynical amusement as intended only for purposes of deception. A high-minded man regards a promise made on the stump by a candidate for office, a promise intended to secure the support of those to whom it is made, as a pledge which it is as imperatively necessary to redeem as if it were made in private life to a private individual; and its subsequent repudiation in one case can only be justified by conditions substantially like those which would justify it in the other case. An honorable man will scorn an untruth on the stump just as much as off the stump. An honorable man will break a promise made publicly in a political campaign just as reluctantly as he will break a promise made to another man in private life. An honorable man keeps faith in public life no less than in private life.

President Wilson's speeches are models of adroit indirect suggestion and avoidance of downright statement. But the other day at Omaha he seems to have committed himself to the statement that he was "willing to fight," but was "waiting for something worth fighting for," for something which would "put all the corpuscles of his blood into shouting shape." It would be interesting to know exactly what outrage on American citizens, or on the rights of humanity anywhere, which would make him cross the line between being "willing to fight" and "too proud to fight." He certainly did not regard the treacherous murder of Boyd and Adair, and this United States, as "something worth fighting for." He did not even write a note about it. The murder of 1394 men, women and children on the Lusitania did not "put all the corpuscles of his blood into shouting shape." His corpuscles did not shout; they did not even whisper; apparently all they did was to suggest to him that it was a happy occasion for his classic remark about being "too proud to fight." I am tempted to think that Mr. Wilson did himself an injustice when he said that he was "willing to fight" either for any great cause or on account of any wrong hereafter done to this country; and that the truth was expressed the other day by his eager eulogist, Secretary Baker, when he said that he was "glad" that "no one could insult Mr. Wilson and make him go to war." Unquestionably General Carranza and probably Herr von Tirpitz heartily agree with Secretary Baker—and deep in his own heart I am inclined to believe that Mr. Wilson himself also agrees with him.

Two of Mr. Wilson's most distinguished champions, one official and one non-official, take the same view. Secretary Lane stated that the fact that "American citizens have been killed by outlaws and bandits" was a proper subject for "much regret" but not for "sacrificing the blood of our sons." Does he think that a woeful allusion of "regret" is the way to move bandits? Dr. Charles W. Eliot, former President of Harvard, praises Mr. Wilson for having made a "great contribution to the peace of the world and to the promotion of humane and just dealings between nations," by having "gone far to establish as the American policy the policy of non-intervention by force of arms for the protection of miners, commercial adventurers, inventors and workmen in foreign parts," and by having refused to adopt the "malign suggestion" to protect the lives of these men "by punitive expeditions and compelled agreements." Reduced to concrete terms, this statement of Dr. Eliot is that President Wilson is greatly to be praised because he took no action when some nineteen fine, unoffending, hard-working and totally unarmed American miners, and engineers, were taken from a railroad train, tortured and murdered by an armed Mexican force. Dr. Eliot has been a severe censor of political morals, strong in his condemnation of bosses, crooked politicians, and demagogic labor leaders; but no corrupt boss, no crooked politician or labor leader, no conscienceless capitalist, has ever preached or practiced a more degrading doctrine, a doctrine more ruinous to the soul and the manhood of this nation, or more destructive to humanity and justice in the world at large, than the doctrine thus set forth by this former College President.

There was probably no American outside his own immediate following more anxious to see him succeed, and more disappointed when he failed than I was. I criticise him only because by duty as an American citizen, proud of his country and jealous of her honor, forces me to stand against him. Apparently the chief claim advanced for Mr. Wilson now is that he has "kept us out of war." Mr. Wilson himself said in effect the other day that if he was not elected we would have war. Yet Mr. Wilson, through the Democratic platform, announces that "the Mexicans have made war upon us, and have murdered our citizens." Apparently Mr. Wilson does not mind the Mexicans being at war with us, as long as we are not at war with the Mexicans. Mr. Wilson's conception of war painfully resembles that described by Mr. Stephen Leacock in his anecdote of how Mr. Smith took Mr. Tompkins by the coat collar from behind and began kicking him vigorously, "and the fight continued in this manner for several minutes." The war out of which Mr. Wilson has not kept us with Mexica has been waged in precisely this manner; and Mr. Wilson's attitude has been precisely as dignified as that of the mis-handled hero of Leacock's anecdote. And the great military nations of the old world have treated Mr. Wilson, and through Mr. Wilson have treated Uncle Sam, in similar fashion. However, in one case Mr. Wilson asserted himself. Hayti had not behaved towards us one hundredth part as badly as Mexico, nor one-tenth as badly as Germany; but Hayti had neither army nor navy, Hayti did not even have arms and ammunition, and therefore President Wilson was not too proud to fight Hayti. He has taught the world that no nation which is small enough to be helpless can insult us with impunity. Are you proud of the record, you Americans of Kentucky, you whose fathers were once not too proud to fight? Mr. Wilson has "kept us out of war" forsooth! Why, on our eastern coast war now grins at us from just outside the three mile limit, and on our southern border war has been waged on us within our own territory again and again by bands of armed invaders during the last three years.

In his great book on international law, Vattel defines war "as the effort to assert rights by violence." The Mexicans, during Mr. Wilson's term, have killed more Americans than the Spaniards killed in the Spanish War. We have now gathered on the Mexican border, and have kept there for three months, a far larger army than the combined armies that took Cuba and the Philippines from the Spaniards—and I throw in all the men on the American squadrons. There are down on the Mexican border at present more than ten times as many men as were in Mexico under Scott and Taylor combined in our war with Mexico. We have had all the bloodshed and expense of war. But we have not secured what follows a wise, righteous and manful war—peace.

For three years there has been no protection of our citizens abroad. The rights of a citizen of the United States to demand the protection of his Government when wronged by a foreign power have been settled by the Supreme Court of the United States, when it said (83 U. S., p. 79): "It is the privilege of a citizen of the United States to demand the care and protection of the Federal Government over his life, liberty and property when on the high seas or within the jurisdiction of a foreign government." This applied to our citizens on the Lusitania and the Arabic who lost their lives from German submarines. It applied to our citizens in Mexico and Chihauhua, who lost their lives at the hands of the Mexican soldiers of Carranza. It applied to the Americans whose property was taken in violation of the principles of international law by the English fleet. The right to life comes ahead of the right to property, and unless we first deal with the offenses against the lives of our citizens, we have no justification for dealing with offenses against the property rights of our citizens. But if we had done our duty in the first case, it would then have become incumbent upon us to do our duty in the latter case. At this moment our first duty should be to see that American citizens, especially women and children, shall not be set afloat in row boats miles off our coast on the October seas, as a result of submarine attacks on merchant vessels. The German U-boats in effect established a "pacific" blockade of our coast. The "guarantee" of the safety of noncombants aboard the vessels recently torpedoed off our coast was carried out by American destroyers, not by the German submarines; if the Germans had themselves made good and intended to make good, their guarantee, there would have been no necessity for American destroyers to be present.

This case of Belgium was the first of Mr. Wilson's international sins. It combined lofty promise and complete failure in performance. It consisted of words which were nullified by deeds. In these respects he made it the precedent which he followed ever afterwards. He followed it when he wrote his "strict accountability" note to Germany and then for a year held Germany to no accountability, either strict or loose, while it sunk ship after ship with thousands of non-combatants including hundreds of Americans; and no atonement has been made for the lives thus lost to this day

Thanks to President Wilson we have shown ourselves too craven to stand up for our own rights, or for the rights of weaker peoples. If we had done as we ought to have done, our neutrality would have been a badge of honor and not one of shame. If we had shown emphatically that we intended to give a square deal to everyone, and to demand a square deal for and from everyone, if we had done for Mexico what under President McKinley we did for Cuba, if we had protested against the invasion of Belgium, if we had summarily stopped the murder of our men, women and children by German submarines, and had then effectively asserted the freedom of the seas against the British, we would certainly have brought about the recognition of our rights, and very possibly would have inspired sufficient confidence and respect in the belligerents to have enabled us to secure peace before this time. Had we so acted, we would have proved ourselves loyal Americans in the first place, and in the next place we would have shown a veritable, instead of a sham, loyalty to humanity. We would have proved that our devotion to humanity was more than mere lip worship. But let it be understood from the beginning that never can we or any other nation take such a position unless there is both preparation in advance, and also the willingness to sacrifice something in order to compel the observance of the nation's own sovereign rights, and in addition to enable it to perform its duty to the rest of mankind.

KITCHENER OF KHARTUM.

BRITANNIA'S greatest soldier son,
The bravest of her brave,
Sleeps not upon the battlefield,
But in a sailor's grave.
The stormy waters, sweeping down
From rocky reef and isle,
Are cold above the hand that carved
An empire by the Nile.

FOR him St. George's crimson cross
Is drooping on the staff;
The heart of every Briton speaks
His glorious epitaph.
For king and country loyally
His gallant life was spent;
The boundless sea's his sepulcher,
Khartum his monument.
—Minna Irving in Leslie's.

COULD I BUT SING!

COULD I but sing and, singing, lay
The sorrows of the world away;
Could I but touch a saddened heart
With song attuned by God's own art,
Could I but sing and, singing, bear
A sweeter, purer note ring clear;
Would better seem the years I've spent,
I'd sing and, singing, be content!
—John B. Thacher.

THE DUST.

IT settles softly on your things,
Impalpable, fine, light, dull, gray;
Her dingy dust clout Betty brings
And, singing, brushes it away.

AND it's a queen's robe, once so proud.
And it's the moths fed in its fold,
It's leaves and roses and the shroud
Wherein an ancient saint was rolled.

AND it is Beauty's golden hair,
And it is Genius' crown of bay,
And it is lips once warm and fair
That kissed in some forgotten May.
—Gertrude Hall.

Report That Three British Cruisers Had Been Torpedoed Causes Investigation by U. S. Torpedo Boats—Only Six Vessels Sunk Identified.